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Chapter 1 : William Maxwell

William Maxwell had begun the practice of law two years before Benjamin Grigsby 's death. The brilliant young law- yer's eulogy to his late pastor is a touching tribute, a fair and fragrant wreath of rosemary for remembrance.

Tilden , future New York Governor and Democratic presidential nominee and one of the contestants in the electoral commissions controversy in which Evarts acted as counsel for the Republicans, [6] chemist Benjamin Silliman, Jr. She was the daughter of Allen Wardner , a prominent businessman and banker who served as Vermont State Treasurer. They had 12 children between and , all born in New York City. Private practice[edit] After law school Evarts came to New York and entered the law office of Daniel Lord; he was admitted to the bar in Evarts served as a junior counsel for the defense, which was headed by Senator John J. But it was Southmayd that Evarts depended on to prepare the case, because Southmayd, it was said, "was a lawyer of remarkable knowledge and capacity and dexterity in working up a case. Evarts again represented the state in the New York Court of Appeals and again prevailed. Thurlow Weed said that in view of his arguments Evarts "placed beyond doubt his right to be ranked among the foremost lawyers of the country. His brothers contested the will on the ground of incapacity and undue influence. The proceedings took on a Bleak House -like life of its own the Dickens novel having only been published three years before with eminent counsel on all sides. There were days of testimony before the Surrogate and two weeks of oral argument before the case closed on November 23, After four-and-a half years of appeal, involving two arguments before the Court of appeals the judgment was affirmed. But, of course, these do not account altogether for his triumph as an advocate, which was largely due to his positive genius for that kind of work. In none of his ways has he the magnetism of a great speaker. He has a clear, sharp, ringing voice, though it is not powerful or musical. His action is sparing, but effective. In making his points he is lucid, precise and cogent, seldom rhetorical or ornamental. He has an easy colloquial way; he is never in haste and never hesitates. His style is classic in its correctness. His sentences are long and faultless, and freighted with words which show that profound thought is selecting felicitous vocabulary as it goes along. He has a fine humor, but it is the humor of cultivation, not the coarse fun of the vulgar. His appeal to the intelligence of juries are the highest in their tone, the broadest in their scope and the deepest in their powr of any in modern times. In he received the appointment of assistant United States attorney for the district of New York. In he was also made a commissioner of the Almshouse later known as the Commissioners of Charity and Correction. Seward , who supported General Winfield Scott. Although most former Webster supporters belonged to the conservative wing of the Republican party and Senator Seward the abolitionist end, Evarts became an enthusiastic supporter of Seward. In he was chairman of the New York delegation to the Republican National Convention in Illinois , where his oratory was at the disposal of the Senator, who most observers believed was a strong favorite for the nomination. Blaine described the effects of those efforts on his audience: Seldom if ever in the whole field of political oratory have the speeches of Mr. Evarts at Chicago been equaled. Even those who most decidedly differed from him followed him from one delegation to another allured by the charm of his words. He pleaded for the Republic, for the party that could save it, for the great statesman who had founded the party, and knew where and how to lead it. He spoke as one friend for another, and the great career of Mr. Seward was never so illumined as by the brilliant painting of Mr. He was a delegate to the New York state constitutional convention of He delivered the closing argument for Johnson which secured his acquittal, an event that seemed unlikely when the trial began. His oral argument helped the United States recover on its claims for the destruction of Union military ships, commercial ships, and commercial cargo by the CSS Alabama and other Confederate ships which had been built in and sailed from British ports during the American Civil War. He served as its first president from to , the longest tenure of any president. Evarts is on the left. Evarts served as counsel for President-elect Rutherford B. Hayes before the Electoral Commission that resolved the disputed presidential election of Initially, Evarts did not act upon reports of corruption in the foreign service and supported actions

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against internal whistleblowers John Myers, Wiley Wells and later John Mosby. However, when President Grant continued to hear such complaints during his post-presidential around-the-world tour, and such were confirmed by internal troubleshooters DeB. Randolph Keim and former General turned consul to Japan Julius Stahel, Evarts began to clean house before the election. He ultimately secured the resignation of a favorite subordinate, Frederick W. Senator [edit] Evarts gained the support of state legislators in for US Senator from New York, and from to he served one term. While in Congress 49th, 50th and 51st Congresses, he served as chairman of the U. Senate Committee on the Library from to He was also a sponsor of the Judiciary Act of also known as the Evarts Act, which created the United States courts of appeals. Chair of the American Committee for the Statue of Liberty [edit] Evarts led the American fund-raising effort for the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, serving as the chairman of the American Committee. He spoke at its unveiling on October 28, Evarts owned numerous properties in Windsor, Vermont, including Evarts Pond and a group of historic homes often referred to as Evarts Estate. The homes included 26 Main Street in Windsor. The house stayed in the family until Snapdragon Inn is open to the public and features a library that displays items related to the history of William M. Evarts and his extended family. Portrait of William M. Evarts Extended family [edit] William Evarts was a descendant of the English immigrant John Everts; the family settled in Salisbury, Connecticut in the 17th century. Hoar, a first cousin of Evarts, was a U. The two were best friends, and shared similar professional pursuits and political beliefs. Each served, in succession, as United States Attorney General. Senator from Massachusetts brother of Ebenezer R. Hoar; and Sherman Day, California state senator and founding trustee of the University of California. He held the position for a total of 20 years over two separate terms. He was a law partner, corporate president, and trustee of Vassar College. Harriman, which later became the Union Pacific Railroad. He was chairman of the Columbia Institute of Japanese Studies He was a noted authority on the American Colonial and Revolutionary War periods. House of Representatives from Illinois from to 6th District; 9th District 11, a delegate to the Republican National Convention from Illinois in and U. Minister to Switzerland Consul in Vladivostok in and in Harbin 11; and U. Consul General in Hankow, Great-grandson Archibald Cox served as a U. President Andrew Johnson in his impeachment trial. In a sense, they both successfully argued their cases, which represent two of the three U. The SS William M. It transported troops and supplies from its home port in Norfolk, Virginia to various ports on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts. After World War II, the ship was decommissioned and finally scrapped in

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His brilliant life spanned that long and interesting period which opened at the Revolution and closed at the Civil War. He was born in Norfolk, Va. These were the days of intellectual giants in Church and State and Maxwell was a king among them. His name and fame have become obscured. There was but little chance for kindly courtesies to the memory of departed benefactors. Yet, even so, this does not wholly excuse, if it does in part explain, the seeming neglect of those for whom he labored more directly. His life is a peculiar one and his memory should remain the care of the Presbyterians of this state, the college of Hampden-Sidney and the city of Norfolk. But his father, James Maxwell, was loyal to this, his adopted home and served faithfully in the infant navy of Virginia. Like others of his blood, James Maxwell knew how to earn a dollar and how to keep it. At his death he left a handsome estate to his children. William graduated from Yale at the age of eighteen. He was a favorite pupil of Rev. Timothy Dwight, who had a marked influence on his life. His degree well won, Maxwell returned to Virginia and studied law in Richmond. He was admitted to the Norfolk bar when twenty-four years of age. The proverbial years of starvation and neglect that test the courage of those who covet legal honors were not the portion of William Maxwell. Nor did the passing years dim his pristine renown. The laurels gathered by his youthful efforts never faded. Each year almost without exception brought to Maxwell some new legal triumph. His reputation spread through state and nation. Many well qualified to judge counted him the most eloquent speaker in America. And it is to remember that America was full of men powerful on the hustings. The art of public speaking was developed in the post-Revolutionary era as it had not been developed before or since. Patrick Henry had passed, but his influence was still potent. Alexander declared in that Maxwell was "the very best orator I know anywhere. As an orator he stood in his day and generation without an equal. I have heard many of the most eloquent men who from the date of the Virginia Convention of 1774 to the middle of the present century were classed among our greatest speakers, and, looking to the sphere he chose, I do not hesitate to declare that in my opinion Maxwell surpassed them all. He never wrote a speech unless after delivery. His "readiness was uncommon; if knocked up at midnight he would make a finer speech than any one else could have done after deliberate preparation. When a committee of the society reported its thanks and asked him for a copy of the speech for publication, they could hardly believe their ears when told that the speech was entirely extemporaneous. It was typical of the Virginians of ante-bellum days that they demanded men who could speak and neglected men who could write. Maxwell published a modest volume of "Poems," dedicated to Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight of Yale, dated "Norfolk, Va. The style is classic in the strictest sense. Every line is carefully wrought and bears the marks of that painstaking labor without which. Aside from its poetic value these lines are deeply interesting to the student of Presbyterian history in Virginia. The Presbyterian Church of the Tidewater section has a long history, most of which is now hopelessly lost. The father, not the founder, of Norfolk Presbyterianism was Rev. The Presbytery of Hanover in 1782 licensed two brilliant young men and sent them to itinerate in Eastern Virginia as missionaries. One was Archibald Alexander and the other young Grigsby. They rode together from the Valley to Petersburg. He gathered the Presbyterians of the borough, and though he did not remain long, he made a lasting impression upon them. Grigsby did not remain, but soon settled as pastor of the churches at Lewisburg and Union, now West Virginia. The reason is vouchsafed us for Mr. The fire burned three days, unhindered, and the prosperous city was a smoking ruin with not a single inhabitant! When the piping times of peace came again, Norfolk slowly and painfully rose from the ashes. At the time of Mr. But the closing days of the century were marked by continued growth and great prosperity. In Norfolk counted homes, 4, people, on her marsh peninsula. In the Federal government purchased a large tract of land across the

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river and began the equipment of the navy yard. This promising development would likely affect a young man anxious to serve his MastOT to best advantage. During his ministry a church was erected. It was the only church in town provided with a bell, hence it was known locally, and has come to be known historically as the Bell church. It was a substantial and even an ornate structure, situated in the best residential district. When Grigsby died the membership was only about fifty, but the Bell church provided some sittings. It was by far the largest building in town. The young minister fell in his golden prime ; forty years of age. He lies in Trinity church-yard, Portsmouth, under a marble obelisk. How bright thy crown, thy robes of honour shine. This dreary waste, that seems without an end; More dreary still, since I have lost a friend. We judge that Maxwell did not take his love affairs so seriously as these ardent words imply. It has always been a characteristic of a Virginia gentleman even the most conscientious Virginia gentleman, that he does not hesitate to tell a lie to, for or about a woman; especially a young, beautiful and lovable woman. Faith, you set me to my task, Faith, sweet Anne, will you tell me. How many waves are in the sea? How many stars are in the sky? How many lovers you make sigh? How many sands are on the shore? Trembling, blushing, too Tis. These little poems came from the pen of a man who knew how to love ; and to love hard. Perhaps he loved too passionately for his own good. He did not marry gentle, blue-eyed Anne. Whomsoever she may have wedded, we doubt that she did better. Maxwell lived for many years a celibate. Whether he lived to sigh for Anne, while Anne loved another man, we cannot say. And why should I wish to be dead? So goodbye, dear Anne, I must go; Ah, yes, we must part! That eye will kill some one, I know. But I must take care of my heart. We so to flight for you. If British lads should come again. The rogues may try their warlike arts. What mischief can they do? Their bayonets cannot reach the hearts. There is more danger in your charms Than swords and cannon, too. Maxwell deserves better at the hands of posterity than he has received. The volume of poems, so narrow that one may slip it into his vest pocket, so thin that it seems impossible for pages to find space therein, so crisp and yellow with the corroding touch of a century and more, deserves a better fate than oblivion. Here are true and worthy poems. Here is real literature with the touch of a genuine artist. We cannot grow so enthusiastic as Dr. A second edition was brought out in Baltimore in , but his talent was henceforth unused. We wonder if gentle Anne was to blame? Such a book would make a valuable re-contribution to the literature of our state and country. As A Man of Letters. The poetic gift was lodged with him useless, but Maxwell did not cease to write. In he published another book, "Letters from Virginia," translated from the French. The "letters" are anonymous, but are ordinarily attributed to Maxwell. We confess never to have seen a copy of this book. He was elected an editor of the Journal of Commerce. The position did not require him to leave his home. Except for the years at Yale, Maxwell never lived without the limits of this state.

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His brilliant life spanned that long and interesting period which opened at the Revolution and closed at the Civil War. He was born in Norfolk, Va. These were the days of intellectual giants in Church and State and Maxwell was a king among them. It is to question whether the Virginia of his time produced a more cultured, gifted and versatile son than he. His name and fame have become obscured. Had Maxwell devoted his talents to politics as he did to law, literature and education, his fame would be secure. It must be remembered that he passed away just before the long and heart-breaking series of catastrophies that befell in the terrible years of blood, glory, defeat and humiliation. There was but little chance for kindly courtesies to the memory of departed benefactors. Yet, even so, this does not wholly excuse, if it does in part explain, the seeming neglect of those for whom he labored more directly. His life is a peculiar ornament and his memory should remain the care of the Presbyterians of this state, the college of Hampden-Sidney and the city of Norfolk. The family was Scotch, as the name indicates. But his father, James Maxwell, was loyal to this, his adopted country, and served faithfully in the infant navy of Virginia. So efficient was Captain Maxwell that he was made "general superintendent" of the little Virginia fleet. In November, , he was put in command of the "Covenant," a man-of-war of considerable displacement. Like others of his blood, James Maxwell knew how to earn a dollar and how to keep it. At his death in he left a handsome estate to his children. William graduated from Yale at the age of eighteen. He was a favorite pupil of Kev. Timothy Dwight, who had a marked influence on his life. His degree well won, Maxwell returned to Virginia and studied law in Kichmond. The proverbial years of starvation and neglect that test the courage of those who covet legal honors were not the portion of William Maxwell. He was promptly retained in a case of importance, "Wilson and Cunningham vs. Nor did the passing years dim his prestine renown. The laurels gathered by his youthful efforts never faded. Each year almost without exception brought to Maxwell some new legal triumph. His reputation spread through state and nation. Many well qualified to judge counted him the most eloquent speaker in America. And it is to remember that America was full of men powerful on the hustings. The art of public speaking was developed in the post-Kevolutionary era as it had not been developed before or since. Patrick Henry had passed, but his influence was still potent. Alexander declared in that Maxwell was "the very best orator I know anywhere. As an orator he stood in his day and generation without an equal. He never wrote a speech unless after delivery. His "readiness was uncommon; if knocked up at midnight he would make a finer speech than any one else could have done after deliberate preparation. He was deeply read in the English classics and had cultivated a splendid native endowment with painstaking self-discipline. To quote Grigsby again, "He is the only eminent man I have ever known to appear before such a body as the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale on one of their formal anniversaries without a single line of written preparation. When a coimnittee of the society reported its thanks and asked him for a copy of the speech for publication, they could hardly believe their ears when told that tlie speech was entirely extemporaneous. Had he written more his fame would have rested on a more substantial foundation. It was typical of the Virginians of ante-bellum days that they demanded men who could speak and neglected men who could write. Maxwell published a modest volume of "Poems," dedicated to Rev. Timothy Dwight, of Yale, dated "Norfolk, Va. The style is classic in the strictest sense. Every line is carefully wrought and bears the marks of that painstaking labor without which perfection is impossible. Aside from its poetic value these lines are deeply interesting to the student of Presbyterian history in Virginia. The Presbyterian Church of the Tidewater section has a long history, most of which is now hopelessly lost. The Tidewater churches sprang from a root entirely different from the churches up-state. The father, not the founder, of Norfolk Presbyterianism was Rev. The Presbytery of Hanover in licensed two brilliant young men and sent them to itinerate in Eastern Virginia as mis- sionaries. One was Archibald

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Alexander and the other young Grigsby. They rode together from the Valley to Petersburg. He gathered the Presbyterians of the borough, and though he did not remain long, he made a lasting impression upon them. Among his scattered flock the Maxwells must have been influential, perhaps the most prominent family, with whom he had to do. William was then a lad of eight. Grigsby did not remain, but soon settled as pastor of the churches at Lewisburg and Union, now West Virginia. In the Presbyterians of Norfolk made the brilliant young minister a "call. No reason is vouchsafed us for Mr. No doubt it was the appeal of the growing and godless town with its great future that brought the consecrated young clergyman from the bluegrass valleys of the west. At the opening of the Revolution Norfolk was the largest city in the state. On the first day of January, , at three in the morning, Lord Dunmore fired the town. He added to his infamy by shelling the stricken inhabitants, many of them Tories, as they fled for refuge to the country districts carrying with them such effects as they might. The fire burned three days, unhindered, and the prosperous city was a smoking ruin with not a single inhabitant! When the piping times of peace came again, Norfolk slowly and painfully rose from the ashes. At the time of Mr. But the closing days of the century were marked by continued growth and great prosperity. In the Federal government purchased a large tract of land across the river and began the equipment of the navy yard. This promising development would likely affect a young man anxious to serve his Master to best advantage. During his ministry a church was erected. It was the only church in town provided with a bell, hence it was known locally, and has come to be known historically as the Bell church. It was a substantial and even an ornate structure, erected in the best residential district. When Grigsby died the membership was only about fifty, but the Bell church provided some sittings. It was by far the largest building in town. The young minister fell in his golden prime; forty years of age. He lies in Trinity church-yard, Portsmouth, under a marble obelisk. His death was a calamity from which our church in Norfolk has never fully recovered. How bright thy crown, thy robes of honor shine. But I, poor pilgrim in this vale of tears. Tread on through darkness and distressing fears. This dreary waste, that seems without an end; More dreary still, since I have lost a friend. We judge that Maxwell did not take his love affairs so seriously as these ardent words imply. It has always been a characteristic of a Virginia gentleman, even the most conscientious Virginia gentleman, that he does not hesitate to tell a lie to, for or about a woman ; especially a young, beautiful and lovable woman. Faith, you set me to my task, First, sweet Anne, will you tell me, How many waves are in the sea? How many stars are in the sky? How many lovers you make sigh? How many sands are on the shore? Gay with morning dew, Trembling at the eye of man. These little poems came from the pen of a man who knew how to love; and to love hard. Perhaps he loved too passionately for his own good. He did not marry gentle, blue-eyed Anne. Whomsoever she may have wedded, we doubt that she did better. Maxwell lived for many years a celibate. Whether he lived to sigh for Anne, while Anne loved another man, we cannot say. So goodbye, dear Anne, I must go; Ah, yes, we must part! That eye will kill some one, I know, But I must take care of my heart. Richmond troops were rushed to Norfolk to protect the twin cities on Elizabeth river, and the navy yard, which the British were especially anxious to capture or destroy. The Richmond lads reassured their tearful sweethearts in these words: The rogues may try their warlike arts. What mischief can they do? Their bayonets cannot reach the hearts. There is more danger in your charms Than swords and cannon, too.

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Chapter 9 : William Maxwell (educator) - Wikipedia

William Maxwell was born of English parents in Norfolk, Virginia in He graduated from Yale College in , studied law in Richmond, and practiced in Norfolk. In he was elected to the lower house of the legislature, and was a Virginia State Senator,